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# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

March 19, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

## STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S PLANS TO TRANSFER COUNTY HISTORIC AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT OF VEHICLES PRIOR TO ANY DISPOSITION

On November 6, 2007, your Board approved the termination of the County Collections Agreement with the Petersen Automotive Museum Foundation and ordered the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Board on the Natural History Museum's (NHM) plans to assess the County-owned historic automotive vehicles before any cars are sold, or are proposed to be sold. Since that date, NHM has proceeded with moving the County Collection vehicles to new County-leased space. New loan agreements have been signed for the seven vehicles that will remain at the Petersen Automotive Museum.

At this time, approximately 20 vehicles (out of the approximately 61 vehicles that will be moved) have been successfully transferred to the new space. The move is progressing at a deliberate pace because it was determined that the vehicles had been infested and required fumigation prior to being moved. Upon completing the transfer of all of the vehicles, the NHM staff will begin a thorough assessment of the Collection to be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided within 60 days.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:LS  
DSP:RTM:ib

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum



County of Los Angeles  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

May 21, 2008

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To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
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From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

**STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S PLANS TO TRANSFER COUNTY HISTORIC AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT OF VEHICLES PRIOR TO ANY DISPOSITION**

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At this time, approximately 30 vehicles (out of the approximately 61 vehicles that will be moved) have been successfully transferred to the new space. The move is progressing at a deliberate pace because it was determined that the vehicles had been infested with insects and required fumigation prior to being moved. Subsequent to the last Status Report, asbestos was detected in three of the early-era vehicles. It has been determined that asbestos abatement should be completed in these vehicles before completing the transfer of the remaining vehicles to the new space. An asbestos abatement vendor will be determined by a competitive bidding process.

Upon completing the asbestos abatement, the fumigation, and transfer of all of the remaining vehicles, the NHM staff will begin a thorough assessment of the Collection to be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided within 90 days.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

August 18, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich  
From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

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At this time, all of the County vehicles, except two have been successfully transferred to the new space. The two vehicles that remain at the Petersen were too tall to fit into the fumigation tent and, therefore, will remain in de-bugging quarantine at the Petersen for six-months. In addition to the two vehicles in quarantine, the Petersen requested a few vehicles remain on exhibit, and new short-term leases have been signed for those vehicles.

Upon completing the conservation of vehicles now in their possession that will be included in upcoming exhibits, NHM staff will begin a comprehensive assessment of the entire Collection, including the vehicles on short-term loan to the Petersen. When complete, that assessment will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided within 90 days.

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Each Supervisor  
August 18, 2008  
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If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact me or your staff may contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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Fifth District

November 14, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

## **STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S PLANS TO TRANSFER COUNTY HISTORIC AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT OF VEHICLES PRIOR TO ANY DISPOSITION**

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At this time, all of the County vehicles, except two that remain at the Petersen in de-bugging quarantine for six-months and the vehicles on exhibit at the Petersen, reside at the new County space in Gardena. Unfortunately, additional insects were discovered in a few of the vehicles after the move, which necessitated tenting the vehicles. Once the infested vehicles are isolated, the tenting can be removed and the infested vehicles treated. The tenting will remain in place for some time, and will delay the process of condition reporting for those vehicles.

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November 14, 2008  
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Museum staff is:

- Developing plans to make the collection available for pre-arranged limited tours at the Gardena location;
- Identifying vehicles that would be appropriate for inclusion in the renovated galleries that will be devoted to California cultural and natural history; and
- Sending the original condition 1917 gas-electric hybrid vehicle to an outside conservation expert to prepare it for exhibit at the Museum.

Upon completing the conservation of vehicles now in their possession that will be included in upcoming exhibits, NHM staff will begin a comprehensive assessment of the entire Collection, including the vehicles on short-term loan to the Petersen. When complete, that assessment will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided within 90 days.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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County Counsel  
Natural History Museum



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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

February 11, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors  
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At this time:

- The insect-related tenting and quarantine of the vehicles at the new County-leased space has been lifted;
- The insect eradication of the two vehicles that remained at the Petersen is complete, and NHM staff is preparing for their receipt;
- The completion of the insect eradication at the County-leased space allows scheduling for other conservation needs, including the draining of fluids and elevating vehicles off the ground to protect historic tires;

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- Outside experts have been identified to assist in the next steps of the vehicle-by-vehicle assessment to determine museum importance and overall collection management plan, which NHM staff plans to complete in Spring 2009;
- An outside conservator continues to work on the Woods Dual Power vehicle in anticipation of its exhibition in the new NHM California Environmental History Gallery opening in 2012; and
- The Natural History Museum collections and exhibit experts have completed a preliminary review of all the vehicles at the County-leased space to determine which other vehicles may be included in the new gallery.

When complete, the collection assessment and management plan will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided within 90 days.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles  
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11/6/07  
status

May 12, 2009

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To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
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From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

**STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S PLANS TO TRANSFER  
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At this time:

- The Museum has engaged and obtained reports about its collection from seven outside experts;
- The Museum's History Collections Manager is preparing a draft collections management report, based in part on the advice of those experts; report is expected to be completed in the next few months;

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May 12, 2009  
Page 2

- The two vehicles that had to be quarantined at the Petersen because they could not be moved into the fumigation tent have now been cleared as pest-free and will be relocated to the County-leased space in Gardena in the next several weeks.

When complete, the collection assessment and management plan will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided by August 14, 2009 or earlier if the Collections Management Report is completed before this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Acting County Counsel  
Natural History Museum



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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

August 17, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
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The status at this time is as follows:

- A draft of the collection management study by the NHM staff in consultation with seven outside experts is being reviewed and edited internally;
- The relocation of the two previously-quarantined vehicles from the Petersen to the County-leased space was delayed due to scheduling problems with Petersen staff, but should occur shortly; and
- The NHM will be holding its first special event to show the collection at the County-leased space in September 2009 for its Fellows, the highest membership category.

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Each Supervisor  
August 17, 2009  
Page 2

When complete, the collection assessment and management plan will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided by November 14, 2009 or earlier if the Collections Management Report is completed before this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Acting County Counsel  
Director and President of the Natural History Museum



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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

November 13, 2009

Board of Supervisors  
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The status at this time is as follows:

- The collections management report has been reviewed by the Museum's senior collections staff and the Museum's newly-appointed Vice President for Research and Collections. Dr. John Long is preparing an Executive Summary which should be completed prior to the submission of the next Status Report;
- The Museum's collections management staff has continued to attempt to schedule with the Petersen Museum its transfer of the two vehicles remaining at the Petersen and not on exhibit, but the Petersen staff has been unable to provide available dates; and

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November 13, 2009  
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- The Museum held its first event at the Gardena warehouse, a very well-received presentation on the collection to the Fellows, the Museum's highest-level support group.

When complete, the collection assessment and management plan will be presented to your Board. The next status report will be provided by February 14, 2009 or earlier if the Collections Management Report is completed before this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the status report, please contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:LS  
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c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Acting County Counsel  
Director and President of the Natural History Museum



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles  
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453 ✓  
status 11/6/07

February 12, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

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The status at this time is as follows:

- An Executive Summary of the Preliminary Management Plan is attached. The Plan will include strategies for future care and conservation of the vehicles and an evaluation of how to maximize public access and fund raising opportunities through the exhibition of the Collection;

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- In the coming months, Dr. John Long, Vice President for Research and Collections, and his team will address issues such as how much of the Collection should be retained, how much should be de-accessed, and the implications on storage and exhibitions. Upon completion of this section of the Preliminary Management Plan (estimated June 30, 2010), the Plan will be presented to your Board Offices and the Museum's team will continue to implement collection management pursuant to your Board's direction in the form of an approved Management Plan.
- Museum staff is working to complete the tire and tube fitting to all vehicles that lack tires.

The next status report will be provided by May 14, 2010. If you have questions or need further information, please contact me or your staff may contact Lari Sheehan, at (213) 893-2477, or via email at [lsheehan@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:lsheehan@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:LS  
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Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum

## **County Historic Vehicle Collection Report**

**Date: February 10, 2010**

This report provides an executive summary of the Preliminary Management Plan for the County's Historic Vehicle Collection, as compiled by Collections Manager Beth Werling from advice provided by seven external consultants on the collection. Furthermore, a new Automobile Collection Committee has been set up to implement recommendations from the Plan and track actions and progress within the time frame leading up to the end of the Gardena Warehouse lease (end 2012) where the collection is currently housed. The Plan and Committee's work are the next steps in implementing the County Board of Supervisors' direction concerning the Collection. These steps also are intended to provide opportunities to the County's Chief Executive Office and Board of Supervisors to continue to review the Museum's management of the collection, leading up to any Museum report to the Board of Supervisors concerning proposed deaccession of any vehicles in the collection. The Plan includes actions for future care and conservation of the vehicles, and suggests ways to maximize public access and fund-raising opportunities using the most significant elements of the NHM's Automotive Collection. This Committee of staff from the Natural History Museum comprises:

- Dr. John Long, Vice President, Research and Collections (CHAIR)
- Dr. William Estrada, Curator and Chair, History Department
- Dr. Margaret Hardin, Divisional Chief, Cultural Studies Division
- Ms. Beth Werling, Collections Manager, History Department

The Committee will meet every two months and report back to the Museum's Executive Staff on progress of the implementation of actions concerning the Automotive Collection.

### **Executive Summary of the Preliminary Management Plan for the Automotive Collection of the Natural History Museum of LA County.**

The Automotive Collection of the Natural History Museum of LA County ("the Museum") has a long history, starting with our first acquisition of the 1909 Welch Model 4-0 donated in 1929. Currently, the collection includes 75 self-propelled cars, trucks, tractors, and motorcycles, with particular emphasis on the early experimental years of the industry (1900's-1930), but with examples of vehicles up to 1984. It is one of the most significant collections in the world, focusing particularly on the reciprocal development of the automobile and Los Angeles in particular and California in general. It forms an essential part of the much larger Material Culture Collection of the Museum, which in turn is integral to the overall collections of 35-million objects and specimens – the second largest museum collection in the USA (the national collections of the Smithsonian Institution being the largest). The Automotive Collection is just

one aspect of the future challenges facing the Museum concerning costs of maintaining a range of off-site storage facilities to house its collections for future generations and further improve the Museum's ability to provide collections care, access, and use. A long-term overarching storage plan for the entire range of Museum collections that will be developed over the next year will also have major bearing on the longer-term storage and access for the Automotive Collection in the context of the Material Culture and other collections.

The Preliminary Management Plan was developed following the return of many of the cars from the Petersen Automotive Museum in 2008. The cars were immediately assessed and conservation and urgent care provided for those requiring it. The Museum then engaged the services of seven expert consultants in order to assess the historical and cultural significance of its vehicles. The consultants used were:

- Robert Casey, Curator of Transportation, Henry Ford Museum
- Richard Freshman, Fossil Motor Sports
- Leslie Kendall, Curator, Petersen Automotive Museum
- Skip Marketti, Chief Curator, The Nethercutt Collection
- Allan Unrein, Director, Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum
- Roger B. White, Associate Curator, National Museum of American History
- James Zordich, Curator Emeritus, Natural History Museum of LA County

The reports of these expert consultants comprise approximately 400 pages of detailed information that we have synthesized and added to our own expertise to develop the Preliminary Management Plan (approximately 250 pages). The following outline summarizes the course of action for the long-term care and public access of the Automotive Collection, recognizing the urgency for better utilizing and re-housing the most significant components of the collection as the Gardena lease nears its termination, and for finding suitable long-term collection housing, including possibly through a range of external loans to bona fide institutions that might wish to display some of the vehicles.

The Plan summarizes details on the state of preservation, owner and manufacturer's history, trail of ownerships, restorative or conservative work done, and cultural significance of 75 automobiles, trucks and motorcycles currently comprising the Museum's Automotive Collection. Of these, six are currently on loan for display at the Petersen Automotive Museum, two are currently in quarantine and will be returned shortly to the collections, and one is on loan to the Helms Bakery Museum. Currently the Museum is developing an extensive multi-gallery exhibit on the history and environment of Los Angeles and the southern California region, and the Museum has begun conservation of some of the vehicles to use as displays within this exhibit ("Under The Sun," opening in 2012).

The Automobile Collection includes a large number of vehicles having direct cultural significance to the story of the Los Angeles automotive industry, or that of California (categorized in the Plan as Class A). One example is a prototype made locally in Los Angeles and never mass-produced (the 1912 Henry Grey, named after its builder, a Los Angeles architect). Others like the 1909 Durocar were mass-produced and sold in Los Angeles for a short time, or the 1920 Burnett –Brunell an experimental model without any valves. Others like the 1932 Duesenberg were partially made in Pasadena, where Walter M. Murphy designed and built the bodywork for the Duesenbergs, as well as a range of other luxury makes of the period.

Class B cars include a variety which are unique or rare and make a significant contribution to our understanding of the automotive industry as a whole. These include a red 1909 Model T Ford produced in the first week of their production run (1909-1927), which set a benchmark for mass production in the automotive industry. Shortly after, nearly all Model T's produced were painted black. Others include the 1907 Aerocar, ours being the only one in existence.

Class C cars include some that are beautifully restored and in excellent condition, but not necessarily of local significance or having relevance to local history or locally significant people. These include the fully restored 1927 McFarlan, a 1963 Silver Cloud III Rolls Royce, and several others. The Plan notes that unlike most of the Class A and Class B vehicles, many of these that have been extensively restored or rebuilt lack the 'cultural DNA' of the original materials used when the vehicle was first produced and thus of lesser significance for researchers working on historical or automotive projects than unrestored originals.

The on-going categorization mentioned above is based not only on the advice from the seven consultants, but also taking into account the long-term storage considerations of the Museum, and potential requirements for future exhibitions (including galleries, smaller exhibition spaces, and temporary exhibits). Actions to follow will include:

1. Completion of tire and tube fitting to all vehicles lacking tires (by July 2010),
2. Off-site loans of vehicles to other institutions,
3. Off-site storage of vehicles within existing Museum and County facilities,
4. De-accession of parts of the collection not deemed relevant to the core mission of the Museum,
5. Reinvestment of funds raised into conservation and care of the remaining collection in accord with AAM (American Association of Museums) guidelines,
6. Developing marketing and commercial uses (e.g., use in marketing, advertising, etc),
7. Developing increased public interest to attract potential donors to support the on-going development of the Museum Automotive Collection.



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
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#53 of 1  
11/6/07  
next status  
- 8/12/10

May 19, 2010

Board of Supervisors  
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MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

## STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION

On November 6, 2007, your Board approved the termination of the County Historic Automobile Collection Agreement with the Petersen Automotive Museum Foundation and ordered the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Board on the Natural History Museum's (NHM) plans to assess the County-owned historic automotive vehicle collection (County Collection) before any cars are sold, or proposed to be sold. Since that date, NHM has proceeded with moving the County Collection vehicles to the new County-leased space. New loan agreements were signed for the vehicles that remain at the Petersen Automotive Museum (Petersen).

The status at this time is as follows:

- The collection manager, curatorial staff and Dr. John Long, NHM Vice President for Research and Collections, continue to research and refine which vehicles they believe may be most appropriate for disposition and which remain most important to retain based on their expertise and that of the outside experts they engaged. They are assessing each vehicle's relevance to Los Angeles' culture and history, value to the development of the industry and design;
- Upon completion (estimated June 30, 2010) of the section of the Preliminary Management Plan pertaining to the Collection, the Plan will be presented to your Board Offices;

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Each Supervisor  
May 19, 2010  
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- NHM is developing a format to allow for periodic guided group tours of the Gardena collection storage facility;
- Two of the vehicles in the collection were included in a short-term USC exhibition entitled "Cartopia" and NHM staff participated in programming;
- NHM has nearly completed re-installing the tires that had been removed from many of the vehicles and anticipates that this project will be completed next month; and
- The conservation of the 1917 Woods Dual Power vehicle that may be included in the "Under the Sun" exhibit (a landmark permanent exhibition on the environmental and cultural history of Southern California scheduled to open in 2012) is near completion, including revealing and conserving its original paint layer that was discovered to be nearly intact in the course of other work.

The next status report will be provided by August 12, 2010. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me or your staff may contact Dorothea Park at (213) 974-4283, or via email at [dpark@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:dpark@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:LS  
DSP:RTM:os

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum





## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

August 27, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

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Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
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### STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION

On November 6, 2007, your Board approved the termination of the County Historic Automobile Collection Agreement with the Petersen Automotive Museum Foundation and ordered the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Board on the Natural History Museum's (NHM) plans to assess the County-owned historic automotive vehicle collection (County Collection) before any cars are sold, or proposed to be sold. Since that date, NHM has proceeded with moving the County Collection vehicles to the new County-leased space. New loan agreements were signed for the vehicles that remain at the Petersen Automotive Museum (Petersen).

The status at this time is as follows:

- Completed the Automotive Management Plan (attached), which stated three main goals: (1) strategically care for and relocate the automotive collection from the Gardena Facility by 2013; (2) notify the Board of Supervisors by June 30, 2011 of any planned deaccession and prune the collection so that every vehicle has relevance to the mission of the Museum; and (3) make the automotive collection more accessible to the greater public for their appreciation by offering behind-the-scene tours beginning in October 2010 on the first Friday of the month.
- Major detailing, cleaning, and conservative care was completed on the 1908 Pierce Great Arrow, that resulted in the car being able to be driven again for the first time in over 10 years. The 1908 Pierce Great Arrow was recently exhibited at the 2010 Pebble Beach Concours D'Elegance (August 15), with transport costs to and

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from the show sponsored by Cosdell International Transportation. It won two major awards at the show, which signifies that the car has been cared for and conserved according to best practices. The wins are now reported on various websites and car blogs (<http://blogs.edmunds.com/strategies/2010/08/1908-pierce-great-arrow-from-natural-history-museum-displayed-at-pebble-beach.html>), bringing greater public attention to the NHM car collection's overall significance.



In the Winners Circle, after it had just won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in Prewar Preservation Class (L-1) and the Chairman's Trophy, at the Pebble Beach Concours D'Elegance, Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> 2010.

- Color cards advertising the newly announced public access to the NHM automotive collection at Gardena were distributed to several hundred enthusiastic car fans at the Pebble Beach event on August 15. As of October 1, public tours will commence for the cars at the Gardena Facility.



Each Supervisor  
August 27, 2010  
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The next status report will be on June 30, 2011 to notify the Board of recommendations of deaccession. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me or your staff may contact Dorothea Park at (213) 974-4283, or via email at [dpark@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:dpark@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:BC  
DSP:RTM:os

Attachment (1)

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum

# **Management Plan for Automotive Collection**

## **Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County**

**June 30, 2010**

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- IX. Next Steps
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# I. Executive Summary

The Natural History Museum has been collecting cars as long as it has been collecting dinosaurs for its exhibition halls. The 1920s witnessed the birth of both of these collections, which over the succeeding decades have come to define the institution. By the 1990s, the automotive collection was so well-known that it warranted its own satellite, the Petersen Automotive Museum. Cars have not only defined Los Angeles, but also the Natural History Museum.

The cars tell the story of the streets of Los Angeles and their transformation from an agricultural town to a megalopolis. The engineers, salesman and stylists from Southern California and their influence on Detroit is a story waiting to be told with the Natural History Museum's collection.

The NHM collection is the largest assemblage of unrestored cars in the nation, and as such, offers an unparalleled opportunity to study the technological "DNA" of the definitive machine of the twentieth century. How the Natural History Museum has maintained the collection over the years has only enhanced this reputation.

The primary benchmarks for the business plan are:

- The automotive collection will open for behind-the-scenes tours beginning in October 2010 on the first Friday of each month.
- The automotive collection will be open for research use beginning in November 2010.
- A list of automobiles to be recommended for deaccession will be provided to the County by June 30, 2011.
- The Natural History Museum will have relocated the automotive collection from the Gardena Facility by 2013.

# II. Purpose of Report

The County of Los Angeles has provided a facility to house the automotive collection for five years (2008-2013) in Gardena. Now it is the Natural History Museum's responsibility to determine the next best steps for the collection.

The History Department's initial step was to assess the collection itself and to aid in deciding how best to manage and interpret the collection with existing in-house resources. To assist us in reviewing the collection the Natural History Museum retained a team of automotive historians to review the collection and to advise and counsel the History Department regarding the future care and curation of the automobiles. Their guidance was instrumental in the production of this management plan.

The Management Plan for the Automotive Collection serves as the course of action for the Natural History Museum to move forward into a new phase with this valuable collection.

The goals of the Management Plan are to:

1. Strategically care for and relocate the automotive collection from the Gardena Facility
2. Prune the collection so that every vehicle has direct relevance to the mission of the Museum.
3. To make the automotive collection more accessible to the greater public for their appreciation.

### III. Automotive Consultants

To aid the Natural History Museum with the evaluation of its automotive collection and the programs planned around it, the Museum hired a team of automotive experts. The consultants were selected not only because of their knowledge and expertise in automotive history, but also because they represent a broad spectrum of the automotive community; public and private institutions, restorers, private collectors, both American Association of Museums-accredited institutions and non-accredited ones, and some familiar with our collection and others not.

The consultants were:

Robert Casey, Curator of Transportation, Henry Ford Museum  
Richard Freshman, Fossil Motor Sports  
Leslie Kendall, Curator, Petersen Automotive Museum  
Skip Marketti, Chief Curator, The Nethercutt Collection  
Allan Unrein, Director, Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum  
Roger B. White, Associate Curator, National Museum of American History  
James Zordich, Curator Emeritus, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Each of the consultants were provided in advance of their visit with a summary of the collection, an "auto biography" of each individual vehicle, and a list questionnaire to be completed following a day-long tour of the collection during which they were encouraged to ask questions of the History staff.

The team's insights and experience were extraordinarily useful. They were asked to frame their recommendations in the context of existing in-house resources, which they strove to do. All were enthusiastic, sharing ideas as to how to raise public awareness as to the importance of the collection, its tremendous public programming potential, ideas for fundraising, and endowment opportunities.

They concluded that our collection as a whole, while not of great monetary value, is of tremendous historical significance. The consultants concurred with the Natural History Museum's plans in promoting and interpreting the collection in the context of Los Angeles's history as witnessed in the "auto biography" document they were provided. (The History Department was also encouraged by the experts to further develop the document for use in touring/website/brochure, or as a book or DVD.)

At the same time, they all recommended some judicious pruning of the collection. While differing in their view of what should be discarded from the collection, all spoke with a single voice regarding what should be highlighted in the Natural History Museum's collections that the History Department was overlooking; specifically, the Aerocar, the Burtnet-Brunell, and the Chrysler 77 auto show chassis.

The recommendations that the automotive consultants made have been reviewed by the History Department and most of them have been incorporated into the Automotive Management Plan detailed here.

## IV. Overview and History of the Collection

Since the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Art, and Science opened in 1913, it has actively collected and preserved items pertaining to Southern California history, including automobiles and their associated paraphernalia. Automotive history, like the history of the motion picture industry, has been regarded as an integral defining theme for Southern California's past. In this context, and because the Museum was the first public institution to recognize the importance of preserving the region's distinctive past in these areas, automotive history has been a distinguished specialty within the Natural History Museum's collecting areas.

The collection consists of 75 self-propelled vehicles held in public trust by the County of Los Angeles. The county-owned collection focuses on vehicles manufactured in Southern California, and on vehicles with strong community associations such as the Helms Bakery trucks, a 1915 Stutz which raced on long-gone tracks in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica, as well as a steam car built in 1900 by a high school student in his family's downtown Los Angeles blacksmith shop.

Despite its longevity, the county car collection has had only three curators; Ransom Matthews (1927-67), and the man he hired and trained as his successor, James Zordich (1961-93). Then in 1993, in preparation for opening a new satellite museum dedicated to the automobile, the Natural History Museum hired Leslie Kendall to oversee the car collection.

This new satellite facility, known as the Petersen Automotive Museum, opened in 1994 and split from the Natural History Museum in 2000 to become an independent institution. At the time of the split, the Natural History Museum's automotive curatorial staff, including Mr. Kendall, transferred to the newly formed Petersen Automotive Museum Foundation.

The Natural History's Museum's collection of county-owned vehicles also remained at the new Petersen Automotive Museum on long-term loan. In 2008, at the request of the Petersen, the long-term loan was terminated and the county-owned vehicles were returned to the Natural History Museum, with the exception of six automobiles which the Petersen retained on loan.

The County of Los Angeles provided a new facility for the Natural History Museum to house the returned vehicles in the city of Gardena. This History Department is responsible for the oversight of the automotive collection.

## V. Collections Care Recommendations

The major concern for the collection was to locate a safe space with a stable environment for the cars. This was achieved with the help of the County in the acquisition of the Gardena Facility. When the County lease expires in 2013, the Natural History Museum will continue to care for the collection in an adequate collection space. The Gardena Facility has allowed the Natural History Museum access to the collection to assess it properly for the first time in over a decade, and to begin addressing immediate conservation needs of the cars.

Outlined below are the Natural History Museum's short term and long-range plans for the care of the automotive collection.

### Staffing

- ACTION TAKEN: The Natural History Museum has engaged two automotive specialists on a temporary basis to clean, maintain, move and inspect the collection for it to remain accessible for the public. Funding ongoing.
- IN PROGRESS: Based on the response received from the public to the Gardena Facility, the History Department will review the staffing levels for Gardena in Spring 2011.
- IN PROGRESS: For FY 2011, History staff will develop the public access to the Gardena Facility. This, too, will be reviewed in Spring 2011 and any necessary adjustments and/or recommendations made at that time.
- CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION: Ultimately, the History Department plans to reinstate the curatorial and collection management positions for the automotive collection, pending funding. This will enable the Museum to apply for grants for the collection, increase public access, develop more public programs, and process more requests for information about the collection specifically and automotive history in Southern California in general.

### Supplies and Equipment

- ACTION TAKEN: Routine care of the vehicles at Gardena is now a regular part of the Research and Collections annual operating budget.

### Conservation

- ACTION TAKEN: Tires have been acquired for all vehicles with wheels and rims and installation was completed by June 30, 2010.
- IN PROGRESS: A draft plan for each individual car (conservation, restoration, preservation needs) will be produced by June 30, 2011. The plan will be developed in further consultation with automotive colleagues. Whether a vehicle should be made operational or not will also be included in this guide.
- IN PROGRESS: Vehicles planned for exhibition at the Natural History Museum will be given first priority for conservation or restoration as necessary.

- **ACTION TAKEN:** The Museum has already spent over \$60,000 in 2009/10 on the conservation of the 1917 Woods Dual Power Coupe, a unique gas-electric hybrid.
- **IN PROGRESS:** Vehicles requested for display at other institutions or for automotive events will be stabilized prior to departure from the Gardena Facility. The Museum is currently performing conservation and stabilization work on the Pierce Great Arrow in preparation to sending it to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in August 2010.
- **IN PROGRESS:** Vehicles with immediate conservation concerns will be addressed as they arise.

### Deaccessions

- **IN PROGRESS:** The automotive consultants did not speak with a singular voice when it came to recommending deaccession of automobiles from the permanent collection. One consultant discovered that a car the others had recommended for disposition actually has a Los Angeles manufacturing past. A next level of investigation will now focus on determining which cars meet the Museum's and History Department's mission. Restoration cost is also a prime factor. Some vehicles are not cost effective to restore as already restored examples are available to purchase at lower cost than their restoration. A final list for recommending deaccessions will be presented to the County by June 30, 2011.
- **IN PROGRESS:** The History Department will also investigate the feasibility of transferring some of its vehicles to "Expendable" status. This will allow greater latitude in using them for public programming purposes, such as fund-raising rides in Exposition Park.

## VI. Public Access

Public access to the automotive collection was identified as a key component of the Gardena Facility by County officials involved in negotiations returning the collection to the Natural History Museum, History staff, and the consultants.

Cars are an integral part of everyone's daily life and there is a natural curiosity to learn more about them—or sometimes a morbid fascination with the piece of technology that has dominated the political, social or environmental landscape of the past century. For this reason it is crucial to allow not just researchers and restorers access to the vehicles, but also the general public.

To achieve this goal, the Natural History Museum will implement the plan outlined below.

### Exhibition

- **ACTION TAKEN:** The History Department has made items in the collection available for exhibition at the main Natural History Museum campus in Exposition Park.



### Loans to Other Institutions

- ACTION TAKEN: The History Department has provided a list of the vehicles in its collection to a number of other automotive museums informing these institutions that the vehicles are available for loan.
- ACTION COMPLETED: Cars have been loaned for display at USC's "Cartopias" event in April 2010, and the History Department expects to receive other requests for the short term loan of vehicles from the collection. Due to logistical and economic reasons, the Natural History Museum does not expect to receive many requests for long-term loans for the automotive collection.
- IN PROGRESS: A Policy and Procedures document for borrowing automobiles from the Natural History Museum will be completed by December 15, 2010 for distribution to all interested parties.
- IN PROGRESS: The Policy for loaning vehicles will be as lenient as possible towards non-AAM accredited institutions, while at the same time remaining mindful that often the aggregate components of a car are more valuable than the vehicle in its entirety.
- IN PROGRESS: The History Department will participate on a limited basis, case by case when funding and staff are available, in concours or auto show events as a means of publicizing the collection, and networking with members of the public with interest and means to support the collection.
- CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION: The History Department will develop a Policy with guidelines for such events by January 31, 2011.

### Touring

- IN PROGRESS: Initially the History Department will be responsible for touring the Gardena Facility, assisted by docent help already committed from Education.
- IN PROGRESS: Tours will be offered to groups of 20 or less on the First Friday of each month. If visitation warrants, then more than one tour per day will be offered. The touring will start on the first Friday in October 2010. The tour number is limited due to space restrictions for large groups to walk between the cars.
- IN PROGRESS: Because the Gardena site is a working facility, no one under the age of 16 will be allowed to tour.
- IN PROGRESS: Special arrangements will be made in advance for car clubs and other large groups to tour the site.
- IN PROGRESS: Two to three staff members, depending on the size of the group and the age of the individuals, will guide people through the collection: one to lead, the other(s) to attend to the stragglers.
- IN PROGRESS: A script for touring will be developed by August 31, 2010, for review by the Head of History and the Vice President of Research and Collections.
- IN PROGRESS: Groups and/or individuals will be charged \$10 per person for tours. They will be required to make reservations and pay in advance. The mechanics of this process will be developed with the Guest Admissions and the Finance Department at the Natural History Museum by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Funds will be directed to maintain the car collection.

### Research

- IN PROGRESS: The collection will be available to researchers by appointment only, based on staff availability, starting November 1, 2010.
- IN PROGRESS: Researchers and restorers will be charged a base access fee to the collection followed by an hourly rate for staff time. The fee schedule will be developed by October 15, 2010.
- IN PROGRESS: A Research Use Policy for the automotive collections will be developed by October 15, 2010 detailing the types of access the Natural History Museum will allow researchers to the vehicles.

### Special Events

- CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION: Further investigation also needs to be conducted regarding the feasibility of an annual car symposium that could operate in similar fashion and be a revenue raiser similar to the museum's annual "Bug Fair".

### Outreach

- CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION: As a long term institutional goal, the History Department plans to maintain and/or place in running condition several of its vehicles to make them available for public programming needs both at NHM and other facilities if resources are available in the future. Several of the consultants recommended that offering rides to the public around Exposition Park in a Ford Model A would be the automotive collection's most effective fundraiser.

## VII. Marketing Recommendations

In consultation with automotive experts, NHM Education and Marketing staff, as well as Museum administration, the History Department has developed a plan to publicize the automotive collection to reach the broadest possible audience using a variety of media and existing staff resources.

The Marketing plan is outlined below.

### Publications

- CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION: The History Department will launch the automotive collection on its website page.
- IN PROGRESS: A simple brochure or leaflet produced in-house about the automotive collection including information about how to visit it at the Gardena Facility will be created to distribute at the Natural History Museum and its affiliates, as well as at automotive events,

historical meetings, etc. The target date for publication is August 15, 2010, in time for the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

## VIII. Funding Recommendations

Outlined below are the Museum's short-term and long-range goals for funding the automotive collection's needs.

### Short Term Strategies

- **CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION:** The History Department will use collection-generated funds (tours, talks, research use fees) to supplement the cost of conservation work on the automotive collection.
- **CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION:** History staff will further investigate the possibility of renting the Expendable vehicles for commercial film and photo shoots. A Policy would be developed for such uses and proceeds from such endeavors would revert to the permanent automotive collection's care.
- **CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION:** The History Department will launch an Adopt-a-Car program (or Adopt-a-Car-Part as several of the consultants suggested) targeting funding for needs of specific vehicles.

### Long Term Goals

- **IN PROGRESS:** The Research and Collections Division of the Natural History Museum will establish a Task Force to address the space needs of the automotive collection beyond the fall of 2013, when the current lease on the Gardena Facility expires.

## IX. Next Steps

By the time the current lease expires for the Gardena Facility in 2013, the Natural History Museum aims to have relocated the automotive collection. Finding a suitable location, both in terms of space and environmental controls has already begun.

In the short term, the Natural History Museum is looking at reconfiguring existing space and upgrading it to meet the environmental needs of the automotive collection. Investigation is already underway as well into the feasibility of constructing a new building on existing property.

A small number of cars will be recommended for deaccession in the summer of 2011, but it will not noticeably shrink the footprint of space the collection will require. After initial inquiries to other organizations, long term loan of a significant portion of the collection is not a feasible solution to the space issue.

One possibility that is being actively explored is continuing to clear and reconfigure space in existing collections storage facilities to allow the automotive collection to be relocated on racks

together with other history collection artifacts. As noted, our analysis of the experts' reports and our own evaluation process have allowed us to identify the long-term space needs even as we have been culling other collections spaces.

We now are able to determine whether the likely remaining automotive collection can be accommodated after the relocations and consolidations that are a necessary part of the installation of our new exhibit galleries over the next two years. If this is otherwise possible in existing collection storage facilities other than Gardena, it will require funding to "rack" some of the vehicles and to create the appropriate environmental conditions; we anticipate that some, but certainly not all, of the probable costs could be funded from the proceeds of any deaccessioned vehicles as is permitted by the standards of the American Association of Museums.

## X. Conclusion

The Natural History Museum's automotive collection is not just one of the institution's crown jewels, it is one of the nation's richest. Our role is to ensure that the collection is maintained in the best possible condition so that future generations of Angelenos may enjoy what we do today.

It seems only appropriate that a region defined by the automobile to the rest of the world should have a stellar collection of these vehicles available to the public to enjoy and study. The implementation of this Automotive Collection Management Plan will guarantee the collection's future as a resource to all.



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
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MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

July 11, 2011

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

## STATUS REPORT – NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM'S AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION

On November 6, 2007, your Board approved the termination of the County Historic Automobile Collection Agreement with the Petersen Automotive Museum Foundation (Foundation), and ordered the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Board on the Natural History Museum's (NHM) plans to assess the County-owned historic automotive vehicle collection (Collection) before any cars are sold, or proposed to be sold. On August 27, 2010, this office committed to reporting back to your Board at the end of the fiscal year with recommendations for de-accession. The purpose of the attached report from the NHM is to describe the recommended Automotive Management Plan, which includes:

- Alleviating the County's rental obligation of the Gardena facility, as the Foundation will take over the responsibility for housing the Collection in December 2012.
- Reducing the size of the Collection by approximately 25 percent through the de-accession of ten vehicles, loan of seven vehicles to other institutions, and incorporation of up to three vehicles in the NHM's new Los Angeles history exhibition.

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- Continuing to increase public access through the popular behind-the-scenes tours of the Collection (funds raised from the tours are used solely for the care and maintenance of the Collection).
- Hiring a new Collections Assistant, who will assist in the efforts to complete an assessment for each vehicle (conservation, preservation, and restoration).

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Robert Moran at (213) 974-1130, or via email at [rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:rmoran@ceo.lacounty.gov).

WTF:EFS:MKZ  
FC:RM:ib

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Natural History Museum

**NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM  
AUTOMOTIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**STATUS REPORT**

June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report is the culmination of a series of challenging efforts the Natural History Museum has undertaken since the Petersen Automotive Museum requested the termination of the loan of the County's historic vehicle collection. Since then, the collection has been cleared of pests, re-housed in a new facility, had the vehicles' conditions stabilized, studied (both with outside experts and by the museum's staff) for long-term suitability for retention in the museum's history collection, and incorporated into the museum's programming. The report identifies how to further the museum's mission by preserving and conserving (but not restoring) those significant automobiles which either relate directly to the history of Los Angeles or California, or are particularly significant to Automotive history and are not well represented by original, unrestored representatives in other major museums.
- We are on track to alleviate the County's rental obligation at the end of the Gardena lease, December 2012, with the Foundation ready to then take over responsibility for the cost of housing the collection. As part of the consideration of the appropriate inclusion of the collection in the overall mission of the museum, the staff's recommendations for de-accession are here included on p 4. This is *phase 1* of staff recommendations to the County Board of Governors for de-accession of vehicles that our expert consultants and History Department staff did not consider to be essential to the NHM's mission. A second phase of de-accession will be undertaken once the current major Los Angeles history exhibition is completed next year. If the recommendations are accepted by the Board of Governors, the collection requiring storage will have been reduced by 19-20 items (approximately 26% of collection) through the sale or other disposition of 10 vehicles; loan of 7 others to other institutions, and incorporation of up to 3 vehicles in NHMs new Los Angeles history exhibition.
- Careful research produced the list of vehicles proposed for de-accession and a plan for housing and caring for the remaining collection. To de-accession any collection item staff needs to undertake a thorough review of its history and assess any legal restrictions. The proposed timeframe is for de-accession proposals to be reviewed by Board of Governors in September 2011, with dispositions completed by the end of June 2012.
- The Museum's effort to make the collection more accessible has been highly successful, as detailed on page 2. The return of the collection to the Museum's care also has allowed the staff to plan for the inclusion of important examples in Museum's Los Angeles history exhibit, the development of which has been the primary focus of the Museum's History staff over the past few years and which is scheduled to open next year.
- To continue and accelerate the progress made in the past year, the museum has recently filled a new position, History Collections Assistant, to help deal with improved storage of all history collections and to assist in the further implementation of the Automotive management plan.

## II. PUBLIC ACCESS

### Exhibition

- The History Department is considering six vehicles to be among the 2-3 to be incorporated into its new Los Angeles exhibit scheduled to open in December 2012. The selected pieces will illustrate how Angelenos used vehicles at work and play, as well as a means of transportation.
- NHM has received requests to borrow vehicles on both short and long term loans from local institutions in the past year. The Natural History Museum is working with these organizations to provide the requested vehicles and anticipates seven long-term loans of vehicles currently at the Gardena facility, as well as two others that will shortly be returned to the museum from other borrowers.
- In August 2010, NHM was invited to show its carefully-conserved original condition 1909 Pierce Great Arrow at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, one of the world's most prestigious and competitive vintage car shows. Many thousands of people, car-enthusiasts from around the world, viewed the car and made positive comments to the NHM staff about it during the show. The Pierce won first place in the Preservation Class, as well as winning the Chairman's Trophy awarded to the most deserving car on the grounds. Funding for NHM's participation was underwritten by organizers of the event, with additional conservation costs provided by NHM.

### Touring

- In October, 2010, the NHM initiated special behind-the-scenes tours of the Gardena Automotive Facility. The tours have been extremely popular and have attracted wide media coverage, including in the *Los Angeles Times*, on local radio, and in *Westways* magazine. Tours are held twice a day on the first Friday of each month. Tickets have been sold out 4 to 6 months in advance, and plans are underway to add quarterly group tours for automotive clubs. Funds raised from these tours are used solely for the care and maintenance of the automotive collection.

### Research

- In the fall of 2010, key History Department staff was re-assigned to the planning team for the new Los Angeles exhibit at the Natural History Museum scheduled to open in December 2012. As a result, several History projects have been delayed, including the execution of the automotive collection's research plan. To help rectify this situation, a new position has been added to the History Department starting June 6, 2011. The new team member will enable the Department to complete the development and implementation of the research plan by December 2011.

### Special Events

- In October 2010, the Natural History Museum, at the request of its Fellows support group, hosted a sold-out special tour, followed by a talk and luncheon at the Gardena site. The History Department, in collaboration with NHM's Special Events section, considered using this as the model for rental events. However we determined that due to the short length of the current lease of the Gardena facility, it would not be financially worthwhile to promote the location for third party venues at this time.

### **III. COUNTY COLLECTION PUBLICITY AND MARKETING**

#### Website

- Once the Gardena Facility opened for tours (popularly called "Car-dena") the most frequently asked question was, "Do you have a list of your cars?" Researchers throughout the United States contacted us with the same question. In addition they requested serial numbers along with more specific body style information. To accommodate these inquiries, a thorough examination of each car was conducted. In response to this public demand this information will be provided for all the vehicles, instead of our original plan to highlight rotating information on 6 to 9 of the collection vehicles online. The new data base will be posted online in July 2011.

#### Publications

- An advertising rack card for "Car-dena" was produced in August 2010, promoting the collection and informing the general public how to book a tour of the facility.
- The second most frequent request received for the collection is for photographs of individual automobiles. These requests come from visitors, publishers, the media, other institutions, researchers, and NHM's own Marketing and Communications Department. The NHM is still seeking funding to professionally photograph the collection.
- Numerous print and electronic publications have printed articles on "Car-dena" since its opening. The greatest response came from an article in the Auto Club's *Westways* magazine.

#### **IV. COLLECTION CARE RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### Staffing

- The Natural History Museum has continued to engage two automotive specialists as needed to address the short term needs of the collection. In addition to cleaning, maintaining, moving and inspecting the collection, they were also instrumental in preparing the Pierce Great Arrow for its award-winning Pebble Beach display, and to gather the pertinent information on individual vehicles for the website. They will also be assisting in preparing vehicles for outgoing loans.
- The Natural History Museum's Conservation Department has completed preliminary conservation assessments of five vehicles, with six more scheduled over the next few months.
- Due to the immediate, overwhelming, and continuing response to the "Car-dena" tours, the History Department determined that additional tours and staff were imperative. The museum's Vice President of Research & Collections authorized funding for a new Collections Assistant position which was filled this month (June 2011). One of the major responsibilities of the new position will be to recruit and train docents to conduct tours and other volunteers to assist visitors and protect the vehicles during the behind-the-scenes tours.
- The new Collections Assistant, together with the Collections Manager and the two automotive specialists, will complete an initial assessment for each vehicle (conservation, preservation, restoration) by the end of this month. This will be followed by a more detailed plan that will be conducted in consultation with outside automotive experts.

##### Recommended De-accessions

- The de-accession process involved staff research on each vehicle's past, records and relevance to the museum's mission, taking into account the expert opinions of the 7 consultants who gave their report to the Automotive Committee on the significance of each vehicle. Staff also must investigate the acquisition records for each car to see what the NHM legal obligations and potential donor restrictions were negotiated in acceptance of the vehicles in the County collections and clear any potential issues before de-accession can proceed. Staff's recommended list of vehicles for possible de-accession is presented to the Board of Governors, which has for the authority and responsibility to decide.
- The proposed timeframe is for de-accession proposals to be reviewed by Board of Governors, September 2011, with dispositions planned to be completed by the end of June 2012.

- Proceeds from cars sold at auction will be used to preserve or enhance the Museum's Automotive collection consistent with American Association of Museum guidelines for de-accession.

**1. 1951 Cadillac**

This car is noteworthy because of its single owner, actor Jack Oakie. Although largely original, it is not particularly significant from an automotive standpoint, and tells a limited California story. The City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department has recently acquired the Oakie estate in Northridge, and preliminary discussions have taken place regarding the Oakie cars. The History Department's recommendation is to de-accession either for donation to the City of Los Angeles for display in its original garage at the Oakie estate or for sale at public auction.

**2. 1961 Cadillac**

This car was also owned by actor Jack Oakie. It is a rare short-deck model and a significant piece in the history of automotive design. Nonetheless, the History Department feels it would be better interpreted in the context of Jack Oakie's life at his Northridge home. Therefore, the History Department recommendation is to de-accession the vehicle either for donation to the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department or for sale at public auction.

Note: Preliminary contact has been made about the two Oakie vehicles but as with all vehicles where the recommendation includes consideration of transfer to another institution, more discussion is required after direction from the Board of Governors.

**3. 1929 Ford Model Coupe**

This vehicle was donated fully restored in 1988. Like its counterpart, the 1931 Ford Model A Roadster, this car is not unique to the Natural History Museum's collection or Southern California. The History Department recommends de-accessioning it for sale at public auction.

**4. 1931 Ford Model A Roadster**

This automobile was donated fully restored in 1991. Because this car is well-represented in other collections nationwide and has no significant California history, the History Department recommends de-accessioning it for sale at public auction.

**5. 1951 Kaiser Traveler**

According to the consultants engaged by the museum in the development of the Automotive Collection Management Plan, for this car to be exhibition it would require a restoration that would cost more than an already restored model could be purchased for today. Therefore, the History Department is recommending that it be de-accessioned for sale at public auction.

**6. 1900 Locomobile**

The Natural History Museum acquired this car in 1956, apparently in unrestored condition. It is believed to have been originally owned by Hyrum Silver of Salt Lake City and is reputedly the first car in Utah. In the 1980s, prior NHM curatorial staff disassembled the car and began to restore it. The restoration project was undertaken when the History Department had adequate staff, a fully equipped automotive shop but did not yet fully appreciate the historical importance of vehicles in unrestored original condition. The restoration was halted midway; since then the car parts have remained in bins. At the time the Petersen Automotive Museum became independent in 2000, transportation staff and automotive repair equipment were transferred to the new museum. As a result, the Locomobile's full restoration would have to be contracted out. Because the vehicle lacks a California connection, completion would not be a departmental priority. The Natural History Museum recommends that the 1900 Locomobile be de-accessioned either for donation to the Utah State Historical Society (assuming it is willing to pay for all packing and shipping costs), or for sale at public auction.

**7. 1907 Locomobile**

This car was donated in its present disassembled condition to the Natural History Museum in 1980. The donor had begun restoration, but then stopped the project. The History Department accepted the gift and planned to complete the restoration concurrently with its 1900 model, but the project was not finished. The History Department no longer has the capability or the desire to perform in-house restorations. For that reason and because of the lack of a California connection, we recommend de-accessioning for sale at public auction.

**8. 1927 McFarlan**

Although this vehicle is beautiful and extremely popular, it is a highly inaccurate restoration and is therefore of little historic significance. The History Department is recommending its de-accession for sale at public auction.

**9. 1963 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III Sedan**

According to the automotive consultants (all of whom recommended retaining this vehicle) this is a somewhat rare Rolls-Royce model in magnificent condition. After much deliberation, however, the History Department does not see an interpretive use for this automobile beyond its history as a luxury vehicle that was once driven on the streets of Pasadena. The History Department recommends its de-accession for sale at public auction.

**10. 1929 Stutz Sedan**

This vehicle was donated to the Natural History Museum in its present partially restored condition at a time when the History Department had an in-house

operational restoration program. At that time the intention was for NHM to restore the automobile for exhibit. It is now is a complete but partially restored car, because of its lack of a California background and little technological or stylistic significance; it is unlikely to ever be a priority to complete the restoration. Because it has most of its original components, however, the History Department recommends its de-accession for sale at public auction.

- Staff believes the de-accession can be completed soon after the list is approved by the Board of Governors, and dispositions could be completed by the end of June 2012. By that time about 26% of the Natural History Museum's automobiles will have been moved out of the Gardena Facility with the first-phase de-accession of the above ten vehicles and the loan or display in the Museum's new Los Angeles gallery of approximately 10 additional vehicles.

## **V. NEXT STEPS**

History Department and Museum Operations staffs are currently exploring all options for consolidation of the history collections stored off-site in order to facilitate room for the pared-down Automotive collection. By constructing additional storage racking or temporary mezzanine flooring, we believe it will be possible integrate the combined collections in one facility, which would allow for reduced rental cost and improved collection management. The Foundation is committed to implementing this or another solution so that the County's current rental obligation will end when the current Gardena facility lease terminates.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Although the Natural History Museum has always been aware that the County automobiles are one of its rarest collections, the past year has taken even its own experts by surprise. The public's overwhelming response not only to the vehicles themselves, but also to the intimate experience of a personally-guided behind-the-scenes peak at a museum collection, and to increasing information about the vehicles on the museum's website and other efforts, has been remarkable.

The "Car-dena" experiment has demonstrated that proper collections storage, conservation and publicity has an added side benefit; increased public access, not just for specialists, but for the general public, too.

The Natural History Museum's goal is to continue to move forward with the automotive collection, both in terms of care and access; the Automotive Management Plan will continue to serve as our guide.